
If you believe you are eligible to vote and encounter difficulty registering, please contact the Elections Division of the Missouri Secretary of State:

Office of Secretary of State
600 W. Main and 208 State Capitol
P.O. Box 778
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(573) 751-2301 (voice)
(800) 669-8683 (toll-free)

If the Missouri Secretary of State is unable to help you, or to report a problem, contact:

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Voting Section, Rm. 7254 - NWB
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 307-2767 (voice)
(800) 253-3931 (toll-free)
(202) 307-3961 (fax)
www.usdoj.gov/crt

This pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only, as an aid to further inquiry. The laws in many states are revised frequently, and may have changed since this pamphlet was issued. It is your responsibility to determine whether you are lawfully eligible to vote, and criminal penalties can result from voting when ineligible or making false statements on a registration form.

Issued December, 2000

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division



Restoring Your Right to Vote



The right to vote is an important civil right in a democracy as well as a civic responsibility, and yet many persons who have been convicted of a crime do not know whether they are eligible to vote. For both federal and state elections, the right to vote is controlled by the law of the state in which you live. Some states restrict the right to vote for persons who have been convicted of a crime. This pamphlet is intended to help you determine whether you are eligible to vote in the state in which you live, and if so, what steps you must take to be permitted to vote.

What law governs whether my felony conviction limits my right to vote?

The impact of a criminal conviction on the right to vote varies widely from state to state. Whether you can vote after being convicted of a crime is determined by the state in which you live, not the state in which you were convicted.

Can I vote while I'm incarcerated in Missouri?

If you are a Missouri resident, you may not vote in Missouri elections while under a sentence of imprisonment or while on probation or parole in connection with a felony conviction. You also cannot vote after conviction of a felony or misdemeanor related to voting.

If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in Missouri, you may be able to vote by absentee ballot in your home state. You need to consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

I have been released from incarceration. How do I restore my right to vote?

The right to vote is automatically restored upon the completion of your sentence, including termination of parole or probation.

However, a person is forever disqualified from voting if convicted of a crime connected to the exercise of the right to vote.

What if my conviction was for a federal crime?

The disqualification from voting extends to federal offenses even where the federal offense amounts only to a misdemeanor under state law.

However, if you are a resident of Missouri, the same restoration rules apply whether you were convicted of a federal or state crime.

What if I was convicted in another state?

These rules apply for Missouri voters even if the conviction occurred in another state.

What happens if I move to another state?

If you move to another state, your right to vote will be controlled by the laws of that state.

What are Missouri's other voter registration requirements?

In order to register to vote in Missouri, you must be a U.S. citizen 17 years and 6 months of age or older, a Missouri resident, and you cannot have been judged "incapacitated" by a court. You can then vote in any election held on or after your 18th birthday.

When do I need to register to vote?

The deadline for registration is the fourth Wednesday prior to an election.

Where do I go to register?

Registration is available at many places in Missouri, including:

- the office of your local election authority
- the Department of Motor Vehicles
- various state agencies

Contact the elections office near you to find out which service agencies provide voter registration.